



Stranger Things 3,9 by annieliyukon

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Summary: A STRANGER THINGS FANFICTION—Following the move of the Byers, Will and Eleven adapt to their new school in Maine. When Will realizes something is wrong and feels the need to stop it, They seek a pair of twins with almost Sherlock Holmes abilities to help them with the Upside down, threatening to destroy the world.

1. The Wall

This story is dedicated to Phoebe, who told me to write this.

Welcome to Stranger Things 3.9, where I pretend to be the screenwriter for Stranger Things. Yet I don't have time to be a Stranger Things writer because that's a lot of work and I don't make money off of it. Therefore, my version of S4 will be 3.9, and it will be held in both Eleven and Will's perspective. Throwing it in every single character's is just too much work. Do not be offended by any of my theories, or be offended that I don't have typical theories.

Last of all, please review if you enjoy.

Chapter 1: The Wall

"It's not much, but this is the new home." Joyce Byers parked the car outside of a small suburban house. Picket fences lined the lawns of the tiny one-story, but it seemed perfect to the Eleven and the two others pressing their noses against the window. She took a deep breath.

It was the type of street you saw in movies, with the girl next door, and neighbors you rode your bikes with. With the school bus stop a five-minute walk from the neighborhood, and old people around the corner always baking cookies that smelt like heaven. This neighborhood was so normal, and this family wasn't normal.

When Eleven peered out the window again, she saw a couple kids their age playing basketball on the street, and staring at their car to inspect how their new neighbors were going to be.

"It's perfect mom." replied Jonathan. They had sat in the car for five straight minutes, terrified of this new change. They wanted to live to easier life, all of them, and they were willing to sacrifice leaving their old friends so their lives wouldn't be constantly in danger.

"Thank you honey." None of them had moved an inch.

"Will?" Jonathan turned around in his seat and faced him. Eleven stared at the brothers.

"Yea?"

"Remember when I told you that being a freak was awesome?"

Will nodded.

"Well right now, let's act normal." He said.

"I wasn't planning not to. You're the one supposed to be in Texas doing some internship before college or whatever." Ever since the fourth of July, Will had developed a bit of sarcasm in his attitude. Sometimes it was endearing, sometimes it was plain hilarious. "I'm going into high school next week."

Joyce sniffed a bit.

"Mom." He smiled. "Don't worry, we'll be fine."

"Eleven, you act normal too." Joyce said to her. "I want to make a good impression on the neighbors."

"Is sitting in the car for ten minutes normal?" She asked sincerely. The Byers looked at each other, realizing how stupid it really was, and four car doors opened immediately.

Eleven and Will climbed the white stairs of their new home and cautiously met the gazes of their neighbors half-heartedly dribbling a basketball. They seemed fine. Definitely not as interesting as Max, Mike, Dustin, or Lucas. When the door of their new home opened, Will and Eleven scanned the house to pick out their rooms. Will picked the smallest bedroom, but it had two large white walls for him to decorate. It was his giant canvas. Eleven's pick was simpler and cozier, and had a giant window. After staying in a lab, then a basement, she realized she was falling in love with the Victorian style window.

"Can I stay in this one?" She asked Joyce.

"I think it's meant to be an office." But after seeing the girl's face

glued to the room in admiration, they put her bed there. It was a start.

Out of all his friends, Will was by far the best at spending money. Dustin, who mowed lawns in the summer and shoveled driveways in the winter, made the most, yet he spent it constantly on ice cream and the arcade. Lucas was the opposite. Although he shoveled driveways, washed cars, and did all the things boys could do to get money, he stored it all in a piggy bank and removed five dollars twice a year. Mike was never really charming enough to earn that much money in the first place, but otherwise he would be good at it too. Will however, always saved it for something special.

After receiving some from his mother and brother to decorate his room, the first thing he did was take his bike to the hardware store. The person at the cash register looked quite amused to see a 14-year old boy spending thirty minutes comparing shades of red, blue, yellow, white, and black, that all seemed the same, then shoving the five tester quarts onto the counter. Then he pulled out painter's tape and left to buy second hand paintbrushes at the second-hand consignment store. The ride home was longer because of all the heavy materials stuffed in his backpack.

The phone suddenly buzzed as he and Eleven were going over how he was going to paint the wall, and they both rushed to the phone. He beat her.

"Hello?" They both paused in anticipation.

"Will?"

"Mike?"

"Will!"

"Mike!"

"Where's El?" He rolled his eyes and handed the turquoise phone over to Eleven.

"Mike?"

"El?"

"Mike!"

"El!"

"Will you guys stop saying each other's name and have a proper conversation?" Jonathan shouted from his room.

Eleven giggled and she answered some of her boyfriend's questions.

"Can you hold the phone a little closer to my ear so I can hear your conversations?" Will asked, leaning forwards a little to talk to his best friend.

"How's Maine?"

"It's normal." They replied in unison.

"Normal sucks, come back soon."

"Hi Dustin." Will couldn't stop grinning as he heard the voice of the wild haired kid.

"You mean Dusty-Bun?" A feminine voice with much sass spoke loudly into the phone.

"I swear Max, only Suzie can call me that."

"Suzie-Poo?"

"Lucas!"

"Yes Dusty-Bun?"

"Ignore them guys, what are you doing right now?"

Will felt himself beam. "Ok so the new house is nothing like our old one. It has big white walls!

And do you know how much 5 quarts of paint and a roll of painters tape cost me?"

"*How much?*" He heard Dustin shout.

"32.87!"

"*What do you need 5 quarts of paint for?*" Max said.

"*To paint dumbass! What else?*" Said Lucas.

After some time, their long conversation was cut short when Nancy insisted to talk to Jonathan

on the phone.

"What do we do now?" Eleven asked Will.

"Do you want me to teach you how to paint?"

"Everything above this line, you paint with this colour." Eleven watched as Will dumped the dark

blue and white into an old tray. After swirling the two together with a wooden stick, she was fascinated to see that the two colours had formed a colour resembling the sky. He took his pencil and traced above silhouettes of hills and people. He had a rough sketch of how the mural was going to be, but she didn't have a mind artistic enough to predict what they would look like.

"Make sure there isn't any white. It's ok if you go out of the lines a bit, but we'll have a lot of trouble if we don't fill it in correctly." Will handed her a strange rolling utensil.

"What is *out of the lines*?"

"It's when you colour something, but the colour goes further than it's supposed to." He said, showing her by drawing a flower on some lined paper, then running the crayon outside of the outline.

"How do I use this?"

"You dip it in the tray and roll it, then you roll it some more like this." He showed her.

Eleven held her breath as he handed over the roller a second time, and when she brought it to the wall, she was amazed to see the colour quickly transform into a sky. As she painted the sky, Will had mixed a grassy green colour and started filling in the bottom. He was very good at staying in the lines.

It took a while, and after filling in the colours, Eleven started to wear out. She looked at him, wondering if he was tired too, but his expression was filled with light. The whole wall was filled with colour, and only a few blotches meant to be white were left empty.

To her relief and guilt, he had noticed that she was exhausted and bored.

"You can stop, art isn't everyone's cup of tea." And she did.

Five hours later, it was dinner. Paint was everywhere on Will's clothes. He ate so fast Joyce, Jonathan, and her were worried he would choke. When she went to check on him, he told her not to come in because he wanted the mural to be a surprise.

Will was almost consumed for the next day and the day after that, obsessed with the wall, and only coming out to talk to their friends on the phone. He talked about the wall with such passion eleven found it hard to be worried.

When he finished, Will lead the others into the room with blindfolds on. This was the first time in a while where a blindfold wasn't used to spy on others, but to be surprised.

"On the count of three, open your eyes ok?"

"Just count Will." Jonathan answered. He was just as giddy as she was.

"One...two..."

She heard Jonathan rip off his blindfold at two and the sound of Will's protest.

"I didn't say three yet—MOM!"

Guessing that she was the only one still blindfolded, Eleven slowly took off the cloth and her mouth dropped open. The only sound heard was Will's bouncing like a three-year-old on Christmas morning. The three were all awestruck. Then Joyce let out a loud sob.

There were thirteen people on the wall. And they weren't perfect looking people with perfect features and every fold of their sleeves right. They weren't real enough to look like they were going to jump out of the wall, but they looked so happy and relaxed that it was the only thing that mattered.

In the middle of the grass were Mike and her. Her head was rested against his shoulder and was facing Will and they were smiling. Mike was looking at her. Beside Mike was Will, lying on his stomach, looking at Eleven as well a huge smile on his face like they were laughing about something. Jonathan was sitting with his legs crisscross, and his hand in Nancy's. Beside them were Steve and Robin, giving each other unreadable facial expressions. On the other side, left of her, was Dustin. His toothy grin was in protest but amusement at the same time. Then Max and Lucas were sitting very close together, also laughing, presumably at him. Erica stood with her arms crossed beside Lucas. Beside Erica was Joyce, and her shoulder was rubbing against a man with large broad shoulders.

Eleven stifled a sob as well, realizing that it was a very accurate portrait of Hopper. She wiped a tear from her eye and felt her heart ache for her father. As Joyce enveloped her son in a bear hug, they all clung onto the hope that everything was going to be normal that year.

2. How Some Twins Embarrassed A Teacher

Welcome to part two of Annie channels her inner screenwriter

Chapter 2. How a Pair of Twins Embarrassed a Teacher

"Do you know why I drove you to school?" Jonathan slung his arm around the shoulder of the driver's seat, facing Will and Eleven with a grin on his face.

"You wanted to make sure no one punched us in the face when we got out?" Will asked. This was the first first day where he didn't run to Mike Wheeler and greet them like all the other ones. It was kind of heartbreaking, the kind where your dreams were wrecked. When they were in middle school, all the kids would talk about was how high school for them was going to be so different, and they would be dating girls, and how they couldn't let anything get in the way of their friendship.

Look how that worked out.

Mike was clearly head over heels for Eleven, even though Max and Lucas appeared to hate each other, they were constantly making googly eyes at each other, and Dustin's spent a lot of his time talking to Suzie on his giant walkie talkie.

Being Eleven's adopted brother was never a position he thought he would be in. El was still Jane Hopper, and at the moment she was the orphan whose dad died and living with her dad's best friend. But by the look on his mother's face after Hopper was gone, "best friend" probably wasn't the actual relationship they had, even if it wasn't official.

"I drove you here because you would crack under mom's crying that you are all so grown up. I learned that for you. Perks of being the oldest." Jonathan rolled his eyes. "But when you're in high school, don't be with people you don't like, never be someone you're not unless you're on a mission, and don't be someone who makes others into any of those ok?"

"What type of people should we be?" Eleven innocently wrapped her arms around her bag and stared out the car window. It was her first day of school ever and she was almost 15.

"Kind people. Be kind to everyone. And be yourself."

"El are you ready?" Will asked.

"I think so."

She opened the car door and Will went out the other side, waving to Jonathan briefly before walking her towards the front of the school. They picked up their locker combinations and shoved their books in their lockers right next to each other, then carried their binders around.

"What do we do now?" she asked.

The girl was curious and terrified at the same time. Her eyes were darting around nervously, and Will had been put in every one of her to help guide her at the new school. He couldn't imagine how intimidated by everything.

"We can walk around, but usually with the others we would just play outside."

"Let's play outside."

They headed out the door and Will checked his watch. They had around fifteen minutes until 8:30, and he was prepared for the worst. No one had really told El that high school could have a lot of mean girls and jocks, but everyone refused to tell her.

"Darling your pencils are falling out of your side pocket."

Whipping around, Will checked Eleven's backpack and sure enough, her orange pencils were falling out of backpack. He helped her pick them up and she zipped up the zipper quickly. He glanced at the direction the voice came from, and a girl stared back.

She looked different than any other girl he had met, in a way like El, but different in any other way. Her jet-black hair was flipped to the

side, the smaller part held back with bobby pins, framing her circular face to look more angular. Winged eyeliner and sharp eyebrows gave her the "don't mess with me look" but her clothes supported her in a different way. Her blouse was too big for her, but it was meant to be like that because she had left some buttons undone so the sleeves fell off-the-shoulder. The shirt was tucked into a pair of dark wide-leg jeans, and a pair of pointy white boots were on her feet. She was intimidating.

Her style was cowgirl, rebel, and casual chic all combined into one.

"First day of school?" The girl's voice was calm, collected, sweet, yet confident. Still, he could tell by her posture that she wasn't your typical nice person. She was leaned against the back of a bench, her hands holding the seat, and one leg crossed over the other. Beside her was a guy, who was Asian, with very similar facial features. His style was unique as well. Although his hair reminded him a little of Steve's his clothes were worn in a way that didn't look resemble the heartthrob at all. Combat boots were at his feet, but they looked like they were more for actually combating enemies than looking cool. His top was a denim jacket, oversized, but tucked into a pair of black skinny jeans. The jacket was buttoned all the way to the top, and the collar flipped up, unlike the cuffed sleeves tailored to his arms. Although their styles were very different, they were clearly brother and sister. They both had the same expression on their faces.

Eleven seemed to be uneasy as well, slowly walking away from them with him.

"First day of school?" the brother looked at her and Will felt that he could be mocking her. She didn't seem bothered, but he was. Will had bent to be cautious of bullies.

"It's everyone's first day of school." He replied instantly. There were hundreds of students starting freshman year for the first time. There was no way they could say it was because they were new.

"No not you." The girl said. "Her. It's her first day of school, ever, right?"

They froze. Both slowly turned around to face the siblings and their

mouths were agape.

Will was careful with his word choice. "What make you say that?"

"People put pencils in a case, and only the most experienced high schoolers put them in their side pocket because there are going to be times when you need a pencil so quick you don't have time to pull out your binder. You must be freshmen. You look a bit lost. I'm assuming that you aren't incredibly experienced juniors or seniors cramming for SATs and even if you were, I think you would start zipping up your bags." She said.

"Or carrying a larger book bag. Only freshman carry backpacks that small." The guy answered for her immediately.

Eleven stiffened at their accuracy.

The two examined Eleven and Will carefully. "Is she adopted?"

Will seriously was getting scared. "What do you want?"

"Nothing. But she must be adopted because if you were siblings and only you had gone to school, that wouldn't make sense. But if she was held back from education or anything of that sort, you are probably her protector." The guy answered.

"Where are you from?" The girl asked.

"32 Emerald Lane." Eleven said enthusiastically. Will nudged her a bit. They just told their address to scary strangers.

"Don't worry darling, we don't care. But where were you from before here." She said lightly. A smile tugged at her lips in a teasing way.

"Hawkins, Indiana."

"Small town?"

"Yup."

"Hey that's the small town with the Independence Day disaster." The guy said. "You must be involved somehow, why would you move to

Maine out of all places. This state is a shithole."

"Ok, who are you? Russian spies?" Will eyed them suspiciously.

"Darling do we look Russian to you?" She waved her hand around her face. "I'm Kaya Park. He's Ryan Park. We would be Korean spies if any."

"We're also fraternal twins. Not Russian spies." Ryan responded. He seemed to take note of the stiffness Will and Eleven were standing with, and he looked at his Kaya as if she would help calm them down.

"What's your name?" She tilted her chin up and stared at them. It felt like they were so much taller than them even though they were around the same height.

Will tried to be confident. "I thought you knew everything?"

"We know a lot, but we can't read minds." Ryan responded.

"Will Byers."

"And you?"

"El—"

"Jane Hopper." Will finished for her.

The twins noticed that she had been interrupted. "What do you go by?"

"El."

"Hmmm." They looked at each other again, a look that made will sigh in relief because it appeared that they were going to stop telling them their life stories.

"How accurate were our assumptions?" Ryan kicked the ground with his combat boots.

"Too accurate." Will said before lightly tugging Eleven away from the

twins.

If Eleven still had her powers, the twins would have suffered something or at least she would have interrogated them into telling them how they knew everything. Yet she didn't and the school so far been just as scary as facing a Demogorgon. Eleven had no idea how to do math, but with the basics like addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, she was starting to figure some out with Will's help.

He was kind of like an understated version of Mike, just not as protective and motherly when they found her. She missed Mike. He always knew the best way to react. Will was great too, but he was shy, and he had been more distant since the summer.

They sat side by side in their next class chemistry before the class started, and right as the bell rang, two people marched in, heading to two empty seats behind them. She was startled to see the mature-looking twins simultaneously drop their bags on the ground, then professionally sat themselves onto the seats like they were at a job interview. Kaya crossed her legs.

Will looked appalled as well. She leaned across her desk to speak to him.

"They're our age?" She hissed.

"I guess so."

Ryan coughed to get their attention and they turned backwards. "Not all people mature at the same rate."

Eleven felt herself turning red as Chemistry had started. The two behind her were good students too. They answered a couple questions each, and didn't answer too many like Kenny W. After interrupting the teacher so many times Eleven wanted to rip out her hair and go bald again. When the moment came as she couldn't take all the attention the teacher was giving him, she took a wild stab at an answer imitating the way Kenny interrupted. To her surprise, the teacher nodded and El happened to answer it correctly. The teacher

gave her a long look and called on her.

"What's your name miss?"

"Jane Hopper."

"Please don't interrupt me Miss Hopper."

Looking around the classroom, students were unamused by the fact that even she did the exact same things he did, but was called out for it. What did she do wrong or different? As El opened her mouth to protest, she was surprised to see that Kaya Park spoke first. She also did it much classier than anyone could have dreamed of. "With all due respect sir, interrupting you didn't seem to be much of a problem when the gentleman in the front spoke, so have you not noticed Kenny speaking for you like the rest of the class did or are you treating Jane with difference?"

People around her made chuckles at Kaya's backstab. The teacher looked extremely mad and Eleven felt herself containing fits of laughter. But when his expression remained solemn, the class realized this could be trouble.

"Miss Park, you can reconsider whether or not I have treated Miss Hopper differently in detention."

She wasn't finished and guiltily, she was relieved of that. "Is this detention a punishment for speaking out against something I deem wrong and unfair or punishment for speaking and being female."

"Are you calling me sexist?" The whole class turned towards her and she was going to answer until her brother did.

"Miss Park didn't call you anything she simply asked if she was receiving punishment for speaking as a female. Even if you did give her detention for being a female, she hasn't called you sexist until she says the words: "sir you are sexist". Although besides that fact, the whole class would view you as one because the male who spoke received praise, yet the Jane received a scolding and Kaya received a detention."

Eleven couldn't believe this was happening because of her.

"What are you trying to prove Mr. Park? Your sister needs your defending?"

"No, she doesn't because she is an independent woman, but I know that both of us are just saying that when Kenny W. interrupted with even incorrect answers multiple times, you praised him for his enthusiasm. Yet when Jane interrupted with a right answer, you tell her not to interrupt. Either this was a very suspicious coincidence, or you have a specific reason for this. We would just like to know why."

A classmate laughed. "Oh man, a teacher can't even debate against a couple of teenagers."

"Darling," Kaya started, a smirk high up her lips. "we could win a debate against the president if he were in this scenario."

The whole class roared in laughter and at the end of the lesson, Kenny stopped interrupting, and Kaya didn't have a detention. Eleven and Will left that class grinning ear to ear.

3. Hoping for Miracles

"That was really weird."

"Definitely." A pile of floppy cafeteria lasagna lay on their trays and Eleven was a bit displeased that schools didn't sell Eggos. The cafeteria was already crowded, and finding a seat would be a good comparison to finding a needle in a haystack. Weirdly enough, a pair of hands waved them over and both students had to look behind them several times to make sure they weren't mistaken.

Kaya and Ryan were eating side by side, and the two cautiously sat themselves across from the Korean twins, looking at them confirmation.

"Jesus kids, we don't bite." Ryan replied as he shoved a forkful of pasta into his mouth.

"Only people who deserve it. I'd say we bit the chemistry teacher."

Will and Eleven exchanged a look. Setting her fork down in ridicule, she rolled her eyes and looked Eleven in the eye. They were dark, kind of like a forest at night. "Did it occur to you that we have biases too and we actually like you, which is one of the reasons we defended you?"

Stubbornly, El crossed her arms and glared at the twins. "I didn't need you to defend me."

They seemed unfazed. "Ok. I guess we'll know for next time."

Will noticed that Kaya and Ryan had an extreme talent for keeping peace and stirring war when they wanted to. In fact, anything El would say back to defend herself would seem like stabbing them. In a way, they had cornered her with their willingness to listen or change their opinion.

They all ate their food quietly, and everything was extremely stiff. Kaya was the one to break the silence.

"You know, just because we know half of your life story doesn't mean

you can't know a bit about us."

Will swallowed his last bite and thought for a moment. "How did you know everything?"

"By observing."

He shook his head. "No, not that, I mean, how did you learn to observe?"

"And we just got personal." Ryan said, raising an eyebrow in distrust. "Great job Kay."

"I like you two. So let's make a deal. We tell you our personal shit and you tell us your personal shit. We'll know if you are lying, and we be friends if you don't."

"Friends don't lie." Eleven responded simply.

"Damn right." Kaya smiled sincerely for the first time, and Will was eager to hear their story. "So even though we have no idea what you guys have gone through, we're listening. Do you trust us?"

"We've known you for four hours." He said in protest. There was a very possible chance that their secrets would get spilled out, and they didn't want that to happen.

"That's not an answer."

"Our friends are going to pissed El."

"How much do we have to tell you?" She asked, fidgeting with her fingers nervously.

"Why you moved to this shithole. We're good people, we won't ask for every detail. If parts are too personal, just fill the gaps with "things we can't specify yet" and you'll be fine."

Will nodded and glanced at the brunette for a confirmation. Taking a deep breath, he started. "El was in bad circumstances, and she was being used as an experiment, going under the number 11—for reasons we can't specify yet—and after she escaped, a man named

Jim Hopper pulled some strings and she was his daughter. However, things we can't specify happened to Hopper and he died. My mom was the closest thing to Hopper, and things I can't specify happened to me, so she took in El, and now we are here."

"Sorry to hear that. Sounds rough." Ryan put his hand over El's and she recoiled slightly. He didn't seem surprised and neither did Kaya.

"How are you like Sherlock Holmes?" Eleven asked immediately. She was very persistent about things and Hopper's death was a very sensitive topic for her. What if the twins lied? Will and Eleven started to worry because they still had mixed feelings towards the two, but felt that they could be friends.

They hadn't met people like Kaya and Ryan either. They were so mature for their age and it was crazy to think that they were 14 as well.

"Practice."

"Practice?" Will scoffed a bit, but he wasn't really sure if he believed them.

"That's literally it." Ryan agreed. "We see a pattern, we remember it, and over time, we get better."

"Of course it takes a bit of talent and drive too, but I mean, mostly practice and lots of observing."

"Drive?" Eleven asked.

"Yea, you know, like what inspires or pushes you."

"Oh. I was thinking about cars." She said. "What pushes you?"

"The fact that you never have to throw punches to anyone because your words will be enough." Kaya looked around and landed her eyes on a person. Pointing to him with her index finger, Will and Eleven craned their heads to see them. "That used to be the worst bully in middle school. He beat up everyone when the teacher wasn't looking, not to mention the fact that his parents were rich."

"In the beginning, we looked at shoes. Just by seeing what shoes they were wearing that day, usually we could tell what type of mood they were in." Ryan told them. "If a person who with a soft personality and usually didn't pay much attention to his clothes wore a pair of Nike Blazers, we noticed that he wanted to have attention. If an outgoing girl who usually wore old sneakers went for ballet flats, she usually had parents forcing them on her."

"We got better and better at it, and we decided that we had to go a step further, and figure out someone's weakness. We would spy on James Woodman for a bit, and usually what we noticed were the people who tried their best to ignore him or fight back ended up in bad conditions. The ones who were scared out of their minds weren't beaten up too bad." The girl twin replied. "But why would someone focus on the ones who fight back rather than the ones who don't, when you could have so much power over them?"

Will thought about it for a moment. El did too. Yet she didn't understand it like Will did, because Eleven never dealt with bullies. She dealt with psychotic people ruining the world for the sake of power. He was picked on all the time, and the weaker they were, the more power they felt. After another glance, he noticed that the kid was a head taller than everyone else. His shoulders were broad, his eyes long and narrow. Traces of his biceps could be seen through his long-sleeved t-shirt. That kid looked like he could beat up anyone.

"He was quantity over quality."

"Ding ding ding!" Ryan covered his mouth with his hand so the others weren't indulged with the sight of chewed up pasta, then swallowed. "Long story short. He could beat up everyone to dust. He was prouder if he could beat up more. Fought back? He proves to you that no you wouldn't win. Ignore him? He thinks that ignoring him is fighting back. But scared out of your mind? He's already won. No need to beat you up."

"So how did you win? Did you bring a knife or brass knuckles?" Eleven asked. She was intently wrapped up in the story partly because she was a great fighter, partly because she needed to know how to defeat enemies without superpowers.

Will just looked at her weirdly. "How do you know what brass knuckles are?"

"TV."

"We gave him a compliment when we saw him approach us. It was about his shoes. We liked his shoes, then we said that his whole outfit was really put together that week." Kaya said. "Better than brass knuckles."

"So he just stopped?"

"No. We asked Penny Fairclough and Joshua Ringer if they would consider inviting him to play football with them on the field at recess. They didn't want to at first, but we gave them a couple of quarters, and told them to treat him like a friend. Worked well. That's them right there."

They saw him talking to a girl with blonde hair and a guy who had a football cap on.

"You just gave him a friend?"

"Yup. A good one. That's all people ever really need in this world if they don't want a lover."

Eleven suddenly turned tomato red. It was so obvious Will even caught it.

"Her boyfriend confessed his love to everyone by accident when he, her best friend, and his sister were arguing about female empowerment."

They didn't say anything.

"Did you hear him yell out 'I love her and I can't lose her again'?" he looked at her curiously.

"You'll never know." El said, her cheeks red.

"Did she?" Will asked the twins.

"We aren't obligated to spill out her secrets." Kaya said slowly. "Is your boyfriend cute?"

"Mike's very cute." Eleven stated very firmly

"Cute enough to make out with him all the time." Will muttered under his breath. "Sorry El."

"What?"

"Nothing."

The twins held onto their laughter with him and she wasn't too happy about the fact that she had no idea what they were giggling about.

Biting her lip in amusement, Kaya managed to crack out a sincere statement. "Well hopefully everything goes well."

"Thank you."

Eleven stood in her room, a Coca-Cola bottle placed at her desk. She focused, driving all of her attention towards the can. She imagined it shrinking, moving, and crumbling. But it didn't. She had tried and tried everyday since the piece of the mind-flayer attacked her leg, but she couldn't even get a can to twitch

Will approached her and comfortingly placed an arm on her shoulder. Then sat down on the bed beside her.

"Do you think it's over for good now?" she said.

"I hope so."

Looking out the large airy window, she really felt nauseous. "I keep on hoping that everything is just going to be the same, even without Mike, or Lucas, Dustin, or Max. There's just this feeling, that it won't ever be over. Are we hoping for a something impossibly good?"

"A miracle?" Will suggested.

"What's a miracle?"

"Something impossibly good, that isn't supposed to happen. Like us living a normal life."

"I'm hoping for a miracle."

"Me too." He said. "What do you think of the twins?"

"Kaya and Ryan?" she looked over at him for confirmation. "They are weird. It's like they have powers."

"Not as cool as yours though."

Eleven laughed and looked out the window again. "Definitely."

Will laughed as well, sighing, and trying to imagine forgetting the Mindflayer, the Demogorgons, and the Upside down.

"Gran?" Kaya slowly closed the door behind her, following her brother into the large white house. She turned around and locked the door. "Gran, it's us. We're back from school."

She sighed and Ryan entered the kitchen.

"I can make dinner today." he told his sister as he pulled out celery, radishes, and green onions from the fridge. "Can you do laundry take out the garbage."

"Yea."

They were silent as she removed the plastic from the can and he peeled the radishes in the sink. Scraping noises filled the kitchen and a little racket formed when she dropped the inside of the garbage can into the shell. After tying a knot, she headed out the window, dropped the bag in the bigger bin then headed back inside. Ryan moved on to the next radish.

"I can do it today if you're not feeling it."

"No, I can do it. It's my day." She replied and finished changing the new bag.

They both sighed and stopped what they were doing.

"Together?" he said wearily.

"Together."

The silence was there again, gnawing at them like a termite slowly eating away a piece of paper. They looked into each other's identical dark maroon colored eyes, and then gave each other a look. They continued doing their chores again, and Kaya slammed the cabinet under the sink shut. Ryan wasn't fazed by the loud noise as the scraping of the radishes grew louder, and shavings of perfectly good vegetables went into the sink. He wasn't paying attention to the fact that the whole radish was peeled, and he was only putting food they could eat into the garbage pile

"After dinner." they said together. Kaya swallowed back fatigue, loneliness, and misery. Ryan didn't show it as much, but he was just as tired, just as lonely, and just as miserable as she was. Kaya brought the laundry to do on the unused dinner table, which was set perfectly, but looked so desolate. She folded all of their clothes there because she didn't want to leave her brother alone, and she didn't want to be alone. Ryan purposely boiled the broth after he cut vegetables, just so they could hold back the time as slowly as possible.

But alas, it wasn't possible to hold back time forever, and dinner had come. Ryan walked in the drawing room, which was too pretty. There was a shiny grand piano, white leather couches, black coffee tables, and a small chandelier hanging from the tall ceiling. The windows were large, white trimmed, and it was an airy space. Yet the room, rather the whole house excluding their bedrooms, was hostile, no matter how exquisite the furniture was. It lacked emotion.

"Gran." he nudged her arm, and she looked at him. "It's dinnertime."

"Already?" she asked him, looking very surprised. "Who made dinner? Sung-Ki sure didn't."

"No, I did. Come on Gran, let's eat."

She nodded and followed her grandson out of the room and to the dinner table, where Kaya had set up three spots.

She saw her brother and her grandmother, and pulled out a seat for her.

"Wait." She stopped midway, and Kaya smiled weakly.

"It's beef soup. Extra garlic."

"How did you know? That is perfect." the old lady looked astonished, and it was painful for the twins.

"I just did." Ryan assured her, patting her back as they sat down.

They ate silently and waited. It was almost time.

"Has Gia done her homework yet? She better not be playing around with the pretty kid who always smokes. She's under a bad influence." Gran said angrily.

Kaya patiently sipped her soup. "Mom doesn't have homework, she's working now. And she's not with dad anymore. He left her when she was pregnant, remember?"

"I told her and told her, that he was no good. He didn't care about her dreams or women's rights. He saw them as toys. I told her that he didn't love her, and what does Gia do? Have sex with him. She can have sex. But not with a guy who doesn't care about her pleasure or protecting themselves. After all the work I put into fighting for equal rights, she acts like it never mattered. How does she expect us to ever gain respect?"

They waited.

"Is the judge finally going to let Ruth and I fight for the case?"

"Gran, you already won. The rule has changed. You did it."

"I did?"

"Yes, you did. You're a hero. Gender equality is unbiased in law

books. It's just sexist people now. Not the law."

"I did it?" she was excited. Very excited. Ryan and Kaya were hoping for a miracle. That their grandmother would wake up, and remember everything. So they could live a normal life together. But miracles didn't happen in the Park household.

"You did it many years ago."

"How do you know?"

"It already happened Gran."

"Gran. Are you my grandchildren?"

"Yes. Yes Gran. We are your grandchildren."

"So Gia kept them. Stupid girl. Just leaves her mistakes for me. You two better be good."

"We are Gran. We always get good grades. Straight A's as always." Kaya tried to refrain from being sarcastic.

"Good. Would you like to get ice cream then? I wish you were my children. Gia was so stupid. Your mother must be lucky."

"That would be lovely Gran." Ryan sighed. She said that every day.

Dementia.

She sometimes forgot going through years of hard work so women had equal rights. She sometimes forgot going to Harvard law school. She sometimes forgot that she wrote letters to universities, begging for them to accept a woman of colour.

She sometimes forgot that her only daughter was 32 now, and had moved to Chicago just to get away from her protective mother. She sometimes forgot that her grandkids were left with her. She sometimes forgot that her daughter didn't do her homework because she was busy making out with the bad boy in the neighborhood.

And more often than not, Kaya and Ryan's own grandmother forgot

who they were.

They hated that.

4. The Sleepover

Chapter 4

"Hello, Jane Hopper speaking." She said in a terrible British accent.

"Jane Hopper? That's peculiar, I was looking for El, have you seen her around? I think her mother may have passed the phone to the wrong person."

Giggling, Eleven clutched the blue telephone in her hand and smiled at Mike's voice.

"How are you El?"

"I'm good. How are you?"

"I miss you."

"Mike, that doesn't describe how you are." she complained, but secretly, she kind of loved it.

"No? Well than I'm good. How about Will. Is he holding up?"

"Yea, Will's happy. Have you got the picture of his room yet? He is trying to convince me to go to art club. I mean, maybe, but I'm not that good at drawing."

Mike seemed to laugh on the other line. She felt her stomach flutter at the sound of his happiness. She missed him too, but she was making the most of it. If she took away one thing after defeating Demogorgons, Mindflayers, and Russian Spies, it was that anything could be worse. So, she was feeling lucky to talk to him at the moment.

"Haven't got the picture. Did you know that will actually tried giving Lucas a drawing lesson? It was terrible. He wanted to draw himself as Luke Skywalker, you know, because his name is Lucas? So Will tried teaching him, but it ended up looking like a tall skinny monster."

"Like a Demogorgon?"

"No no no, not at all. It was way uglier than a Demogorgon."

She let out a laugh that was more out of astonishment than amusement. "Ok Mike. But do you think I should do it?"

"Do you want to?"

"Well, I guess I can try, and Will will be lonely if I don't."

"Will will. Ha."

Rolling her eyes at the stubborn joke, she continued. "But seriously. Should I join?"

He paused. *"If you want?"*

"Mike." She held out the "I" for a while. "I need your opinion."

"El I don't know."

"Darling just do it! Just like the Nike slogan!" Kaya cried. She laughed and yelled back at the twins, who were sleeping over that night.

"What's Nike?" El turned back to the phone.

"It's a shoe brand. It's super cool. And who was that?"

"Kaya."

He seemed surprised. *"Who's Kaya?"*

"Someone who is more likely to be a Korean Spy than a Russian Spy." She answered plainly.

"Um, ok?"

"She is also a fraternal twin. And she and Ryan are having a sleepover in the basement with me and Will. Kaya and Ryan won't go to art club because they already tried it with Will and they hated it."

She recalled when they agreed to stay after school a week ago to paint still life with Will, and he took home three small canvases. One with a nice bowl of fruit, and two that were unreadable, saying that

it was abstract, and beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

He failed to keep his cool when she kept pestering him about it. He told her that they were meant to be the same fruit bowl, because the all were supposed to be painting the same thing. The twins had focused on the technique, tried too hard, and ended up giving the canvases to him.

Will hung the art pieces in her room, and they made quite a good statement against the plain walls.

"Oh. That's cool, I guess. You made new friends already?"

"Yup. They are new friends. We're watching "Grease" in the basement. Kaya said I would like it and so would Will."

"Grease? Like the musical?"

"What's a musical Mike?"

"It's when people randomly start singing in the middle of nowhere and everything is rehearsed and unrealistic. My sister made me watch it a few years ago."

"Oh."

"Are you sure Will would like it? He doesn't really like romance or musicals."

Eleven protested. "But Kaya said he would."

"Do you believe her? Is she your new best friend now?"

"No! Max will always be my best friend. Kaya is just a new friend. She's also always right."

"No one is always right." Mike told her firmly.

"Maybe not about everything, but when it comes to what people would like and personal—personilty—persitaly—"

"Personalities?"

"Yes! Personalities. She is always right about those. So is Ryan."

"El, no one is always right."

Will had trotted into the kitchen and took the phone. "They are always right about personality traits and emotions. You think they have psychic abilities at first, but they explain to you how they know, you realize that the two are extremely smart. If Sherlock Holmes's soul was split into two and was reincarnated, that is who they are."

"Jeez."

"They knew Eleven had her first day of school just by looking at her. And that she was living with me and we are practically siblings."

Mike scoffed over the phone and Eleven craned her neck so both Will and her could listen at the same time. *"Are they Russian spies?"*

"No, they are Korean."

"Are they Korean spies?"

"Mike, they are cool. They know information about other kids too. It's not just us."

"They sound pretty...invasive."

"Only for twenty minutes, but then they just stopped asking questions because they 'read us' or something."

"Read you?"

"It's very hard to explain, but by your posture, clothes you wear, haircut, and expression, they can basically come up with a summary of your life story. Then how you handle it takes part in the second part of your life story."

"Damn. What's my life story according to them?"

"If they can't see you, they can't judge you." Will told him.

"Well, it's good you have new friends."

"Don't be so surprised Mike. We are cool."

"No, you're not." They both laughed and wheezed with Mike, who's mother was calling him for dinner in the background. "I got to go. I miss you guys a lot. And Nancy is in college now so I get the phone. I'll call you guys later."

"Bye Mike!"

Eleven couldn't stop smiling, and it was really quite odd. For a weird reason, talking to him lifted her spirits to another level and she practically pranced into the basement. Eleven and Will seated themselves between the twins on the small couch, and she grabbed for the popcorn in Ryan's hands, reaching over Will's body. He let out a grunt of complaint and she smiled, then waited for the movie to start.

It was a good movie. It was quite entertaining, but she didn't understand a lot of it.

"What's a virginity?"

Will coughed on the popcorn and Ryan put his hand over Will's back. He kept on forgetting that Eleven never went through health class. He was saved by Kaya, who was a lot better at acting mature in weird situations like these.

"It's kind of like a state of being, when you never had sex before. When you have sexual intercourse, you are no longer a virgin, and whether or not you choose to wait for the right one or just do it is completely up to you."

Kaya looked at Will with her eyebrows raised. "She's fourteen and she doesn't know this?"

Will blushed. "She er, her dad didn't teach her about this stuff when she was homeschooled."

"I found a Cosmopolitan magazine on the ground and figured out how babies were made by reading it. And remembering when my grandma told me to stay away from weird guys if I didn't want to get pregnant. I was in grade three."

"Not everyone is like you Kaya." Ryan said to his sister. Eleven still looked clueless.

"Uh, what is sexual intercourse."

Ryan started laughing and Will glared at him, while Kaya just looked at her with pity. She sighed and patted El's back.

"We'll tell you later Jane. Let's just watch the movie."

A few moments later, two characters were making out in the car. They looked like much better kissers than she and Mike were.

"What's a condom."

Will almost died again.

"Kaya will tell you later." Ryan replied as he handed Will the coke can so he can calm down.

"Why me?" she protested.

"You're a girl!"

Rolling her eyes in annoyance, she looked over to see if Will was ok, and sighed. "This better be the only time my sex plays a role in anything."

"So sex is gender?" El asked, wondering if something as simple as boy or girl could cause such a commotion.

Ryan grimaced and tilted his head side to side, as if he was nodding and shaking his head at once. "That's one meaning."

"We'll tell you later." Will said to his sister, secretly praying she wouldn't ask anymore questions. "Or Kaya will."

Thankfully, Eleven decided to keep questions to herself, although she had a sort of idea what it was.

In the middle of the movie, the girl was reminded of when she talked to Mike, and he had asked if Will would like a movie such as *Grease*.

She could understand where he was coming from. The movie was a romance rather than adventure or anything of that sort. It was centered around two people falling in love, and Will was the only one in their friend group without a "lover". But when she glanced at him, he seemed to be just as entranced by the people dancing as she was.

The twins were right.

As always.

During the end of the movie, Eleven wondered how to bring up her questions from earlier, and she looked at the three who were stiffer than usual. She could even read their expressions, and they were hoping she forgot. But she didn't.

Kaya abruptly stood up and faced the boys. "I'll do all the talking, but you two are going to witness every single moment."

Ryan reddened and looked at Will. "He can draw, how about you leave me."

"NO! I'm not drawing *that*."

"Well she's your sister!"

"Well you're just going to leave your sister to be a science teacher?"

"I mean, what can I do?"

"How about I draw the human and you draw the...anatomy"

"Gross."

"What else are you gonna do?"

"Shouldn't your mother explain it to her?"

"Our mother is going to talk about how your virginity is a flower and once you grumble it, it will never be the same."

"Really." Ryan frowned in disbelief. "Did she come from a "you must wait until marriage" family?"

"For the first time, you're wrong. The opposite."

"Ooh, that's worse."

Eleven just sat there, watching the argument between the boys. She grabbed some popcorn from Kaya. "Is your plan to argue it out so you won't have to tell me all of this? It's working."

They sighed and knew, that on some degree, Eleven deserved to know.

Unhappily, Will grabbed a couple sheets of paper. He drew a figure of a male and a figure of a female, unclothed, then he passed it to Ryan. "Honors."

Ryan gritted his teeth and looked at El. "I hope I don't offend anyone, and we are burning these after ok?"

"Ok."

He quickly scribbled parts of a female and male onto the sheets of paper. Then he passed the papers to El.

"Take a look."

She examined both of them, and only the body of a female was familiar.

"What's this?" she pointed between the thighs of the male body.

The boys turned to Kaya. She glared at them.

"May we leave now Mother Kaya?"

"No."

She took a deep breath, and put on a straight face. "To distract yourself, maybe you can draw me the side anatomy of that," she pointed to the male anatomy, "and draw me the reproductive organs of a female." Then she turned to Eleven. "That is a penis."

The two boys coughed really hard, and Will seemed to be redder than

a tomato. He was not ok, because they really shouldn't have been in the position to tell her that.

"A penis?"

"A reproductive organ. It's used for making babies."

Eleven frowned. "Ok."

Kaya grabbed another sheet of paper, and showed El. "This is the hole you pee from, this is where you er...you know, and this is the vagina."

Will was so red Eleven was worried he would die. She decided not to say anything else.

Kaya took another sheet of paper and showed her the inside of it. "When the penis enters a vagina, you are having sexual intercourse, aka sex. When the male gets er...into it, he will ejaculate into the vagina, and that is called sperm."

She continued explaining the ways of reproduction, and Eleven was very surprised about how it all worked. Ryan kept on raising his eyebrows at Kaya, who had now begun explaining why people had sex.

"It like a stage. The first stage of a relationship is when you hug and smile at each other, then you kiss, then you make out, then you have sex. Most people have sex after a few months of making out, but some will wait until marriage."

"Should Mike and I have sex?"

Will stood up. "I'm sorry. I need to leave."

Ryan pulled him back down. "Nope."

"I can't listen to my sister talk about my best friend's sex life."

"And I can't listen my sister educating your sister of how passing on genes work but here I am. Grow a pair Byers."

Will rubbed his temples and sighed. "Kaya?"

"As much as I pity you, watching you both die every minute is oddly entertaining."

She moved on to telling Eleven that she could have sex no matter what stage of a relationship she was in, but she had to be ready, and the guy had to be ready too. To Will's dismay, she asked if she was ready to have sex with Mike. Kaya said that she would have to decide that herself, and Mike would have to decide that too.

When their conversation ended, Will announced that science time was over, and the all crawled in their sleeping bags.

Eleven glanced across the corner of the room, and she saw the empty coke can sitting on the table. The twins were sound asleep, and she was focused all her attention onto the can. She made herself angry. She thought about Hopper and how he wasn't here, and it was the Russian's fault. Suddenly there was a twitch.

The can had not crumbled, but it moved. Quickly closing her eyes, she thought about Hopper, trying to see if he was dead or alive. She was drained, but there was a flash, and she saw him in the void for a second, being dragged by guards. But that was it. All she saw was a scream, and blood all over his body.

She nudged Will's sleeping bag, and he groaned in protest.

"What?" he mumbled.

"I saw him."

"Saw who?"

"Dad!"